

One Drink Too Many

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Summary: Bosworth's been arrested, Cardiff's going under, and Cameron hates him. Joe decides to get himself drunk, but some helpful advice from another lost soul drowning her own sorrows makes Joe rethink his options. Set in the middle of Episode 8.

One Drink Too Many

Title: _"One Drink Too Many"_

Author: LegolasLover2003 aka Ashley

Category: Tv -_ "Halt and Catch Fire"_

Genre: General

Rating: T

Disclaimer: I do not own any rights to AMC's _"Halt and Catch Fire"_ , I just really love this show and hope AMC renews it for a second season. **COME ON AMC! RENEW HCF!**

Note: Spoilers for Episode 8 in this story. Actually, this story takes place in the middle of Episode 8. See the Author's Note at the end of the story for more details.

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<p>And it's a shame that shit goes wrong
But it happens to the rest of us._

-**Team Drama**-

>(The Automatic Automatic)<p>

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><p>One Drink Too Many_

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><p>The ice wasn't even getting the chance to melt, and the bartender was beginning to worry that this particular patron was going to need to be carried out by the end of the night. He wiped down the bar, fixed another bourbon on the rocks, then slid it across the counter to the dark haired man in a fine expensive suit. This guy had been in a few times for the food, complaining once that it wasn't really Mexican food, to which the bartender had quipped that that's why it said Tex-Mex on the sign too. The man had smirked and kept drinking and he had come back after that... though the bartender never got a name to go with the face.<p>

"Sure you don't want anything to eat?" the bartender asked, going back to washing glasses in the sink behind the bar.

But the man shook his head and just downed half the bourbon in one go.

>Shrugging the bartender went back to work.<p>

Joseph MacMillan had done a lot of stupid shit in his life. Usually at the time he thought it was brilliant... but this... what in god's name had he been thinking?! For a moment Joe just closed his eyes, rubbing them with the fingers of his left hand while his right nursed a nearly empty bourbon on the rocks. He sighed, replaying the events of the day over and over again in his mind, trying to find some tiny little solution... anything...

Cameron had hacked into a bank of all things and stolen Cardiff funds to transfer into the PC program, under the direction of Bosworth of all people! Gordon was too busy screaming at Joe and thinking him some evil genius who had gotten John arrested in some grand plan to come out on top! And what was the visionary supposed to do? Just sit back and hope things worked out?

>Downing the rest of the glass, he passed it back across the bar for a refill.<p>

"Looks like you're having a bad day."

Joe glanced to his left, noticing for the first time a petite brunette with round glasses. She was wearing a t-shirt and jeans with a half coat draped over the bar near her left elbow and high heels. For a second the man almost laughed... because she was just so miss-matched that her wardrobe made Cameron's look sane.

He shrugged slightly, "Bad day at the office."

"You too? I just got fired." she replied honestly, grabbing the martini with three olives that the bartender placed in front of her.

"My boss just got arrested." Joe countered, green gaze watching the bartender pour his fourth bourbon. "I think I'd rather be fired."

The woman smirked, "Why? Least you've still got a job. What do you do anyway?"

Sighing slightly, Joe graced her with a glance. "I am the... product manager for Cardiff Electric."

"No shit... I worked for them for a while. Secretary. Place was too

stick-up-the-ass for me. I quit and went to work in retail. More fun to interact with customers than coworkers."

"Is that a fact?" Joe replied, looking the woman up and down again. She couldn't have been more than twenty-seven. "Who were you secretary to? Bosworth?"

"Cardiff." she replied.

Joe sucked air in through his teeth, "Ew... Well makes sense why you quit then." he said, long fingers gripping his newly arrived drink.

"So does that mean Cardiff got arrested? Please tell me yes..." the woman asked, turning hazel eyes on him in hope of news that the greedy bastard had landed himself in prison.

But MacMillan shook his head, "No actually... Bosworth did."

"Ouch... he was at least a half decent human being too."

Silence reigned between them for a time. Mariachi music coming through the speakers of the restaurant played one or two songs before either of the pair said anything further.

"So... I get fired and I'm out having a drink. That I get. But Old Bos gets sent to jail and you're getting drunk. Not quite getting it, Mister..."

"MacMillan. Joe MacMillan." the man replied.

The woman smirked, "Good. I half expected you to reply with Bond, James Bond... what with the suit and all."

Joe laughed. "I'd need your martini for that though, wouldn't I?" he asked, cracking a smile at the joke. "But no our project that we've invested everything in will go under because of this. Not the best of days when your creation gets destroyed."

"What'd you make?" she asked, sharing in the smile at her earlier joke.

From the inner pocket of his jacket, Joe drew out one of the small brochures that the company had printed up for the convention. He set it on the bar, put two fingers on it, then slid it across to her.

The woman picked up the brochure, flipping through it for a second. "A computer. Not bad. What'd you make on it?"

Joe went silent before downing half his drink again and finally replying. "Nothing."

"Nothing?" she asked, quirking an eyebrow at him. "I thought you said it was your creation?"

"Yeah well... someone has to kick asses to get things like that built." Joe finished, motioning for his tab from the bartender.

The woman frowned, "Didn't mean to pick a sore spot, Joe."

"It's not a..."

"Course it is!" she quickly interrupted him, turning on her stool and staring directly at the man. "You're downing bourbons like they're ginger ale and you've got a stomach ache. This thing must've meant a lot to you for that kind of intoxication."

For a moment, Joe paused. Was it the Giant that he was drinking over... or was it the notion that Cameron was pissed off at him... again? He reached up, rubbing the left side of his jaw for a moment.

"Didn't notice the bruise before in this light but..."

Before the woman could say anything else, Joe pinned her with his green gaze. "I screwed up, alright? I don't know how to fix it and now we'll never get this damned computer to Comdex because she..." he pressed his lips together tight and just turned his head, focusing on the rest of the bourbon in his glass before downing it too.

"She? Now the drinking makes sense." the woman replied with a half smirk. "Look, whatever 'she' did or said, can't be the end of the world. Let her cool off, or let yourself cool off first, then try again."

Standing, Joe walked over to her bar stool. He was a good six foot three inches and the woman was barely over five feet. Towering over her, the man felt a bit more imposing and self important.

"So you're suggesting I... focus on other things?" he asked.

The woman nodded. "Yep. Focus on other things then patch it up with her. BUT..." and at this she looked up at him. "Don't think of using me to focus on. Got it? My aim right here, right now, is to get drunk... get a cab... then sleep it off and start looking for work again tomorrow. Your aim and my aim ain't got nothing to do with one another."

Her attitude irritated MacMillan, but he understood that he couldn't just muscle his way in with this woman like he had with Cameron or Travis. And yet the man's frustration was plain and evident in the way his green gaze darkened.

"Go home, Joe. Think about if you want to help Cardiff Electric or move on. I moved on. Then think about that 'she' you hinted at. But think about it sober, not drunk. Got it?" the woman asked, keeping her gaze locked with his own.

Joe arched an eyebrow at her. The bartender slid his tab over the bar and as he picked it up, the man nodded. "Good advice. Maybe you should think about a career in counseling? Maybe pick up a psychology degree or two along the way?" he suggested, pulling cash from the wallet in his coat pocket.

"Got one already." the woman teased with a wink before finishing her martini and asking the bartender for another. "Hope things work out though, Joe. I wouldn't mind buying one of these guys." she replied, tapping the brochure.

A slight smirk came to the man's lips. "Keep it. Might be a collector's item one day... the day Cardiff Electric crashed and burned." Joe added, tipping the bartender.

He turned on one heel and headed toward the door... before stopping and looking back to the woman. "I never got your name."

"That's cause I never gave it." she replied with a teasing wink, before going back to her new martini.

Figuring that was all he was going to get in reply, Joe turned and headed out of the Mexican restaurant. He was glad that his apartment was only a few blocks away... meant he could leave the Porsche at home and not risk another 'interesting' run in with the local cops. As Joe walked, he realized that the woman was probably right. He needed to just get sober and figure out his next course of action.

Unbeknownst to him however, MacMillan was about to make a rather interesting phone call and then find himself on a plane to New York immediately afterward.

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><p>THE END

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><p>Author's Notes:

- So this was inspired by a random pic/portion from one of the AMC "Something more..." commercials where they showed Joe at a bar with green-ish lights behind him. It always made me think of a Mexican food restaurant... That scene never actually happened in the series so I'm assuming it was a deleted scene.

- This story takes place between when Joe, Cameron, and Gordon were in Gordon's garage discussing Cameron's hacking that got Bosworth thrown in jail, and when Joe makes the phone call to Jim and finds out that IBM is coming out with a portable. So basically it takes place in the middle of Episode 8 "The 214s". So keep in mind that Cameron did punch Joe just prior to this story.

- OC woman doesn't have a name. She's not going to get a name. Who she is isn't important... what's important is that she made Joe stop drowning his sorrows and start thinking straight.

- Cover image for this story is of Joe at the strip club in episode 7... but if anyone has a pic of the scene I'm talking about from the AMC commercial, please send it my way so I can change the cover image to what I want it to be.

* * *

><p>Muse Moments:

"You know you were supposed to be working on other stories, right?"

>Nil smirks, glancing at Joe. "Yeah well I had writer's block today

and then BOOM I just had this crazy idea in the shower while washing my hair and so I went with it."
"I'm glad you did. I get more writing time." Joe replies with a smirk, fixing himself a drink before handing one to Nil. "So... any idea what you're working on next?"

>She nods. "I've got the first chapter for my 'The Fall' story called 'Teeth' almost finished so that's probably next. I just hope I get over this bout of writer's block... ugh."<p>

End
file.